

moving said focal point of said pulsed laser beam along a predetermined path within the stroma of the cornea to photoalter a layer of stromal tissue[ having a preselected shape], said layer being an interface between the interior surface of [said flap] a removable corneal layer and a bed of stromal tissue;

incising the cornea between the anterior surface of the cornea and the[ preselected] layer to create a peripheral edge for said [flap, said flap] removable corneal layer, said removable corneal layer substantially overlying said bed of stromal tissue;

lifting said [flap] removable corneal layer to expose said bed of stromal tissue;

photoaltering at least a portion of said bed of stromal tissue[ to create a void in the stromal tissue of the cornea]; and

replacing said [flap] removable corneal layer over said[ void] photoaltered bed of stromal tissue.

13. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 12 wherein said [void] photoaltered portion is lens-shaped having an anterior surface, a posterior surface, and an annular surface.

Please amend claims 20 and 21 as follows:

20. (Amended) [A method as recited in claim 12] The method of claim 38 wherein said peripheral edge of said flap is formed with a tab to assist in lifting and repositioning of said flap.

21. (Amended) [A method as recited in claim 12] The method of claim 38 wherein said peripheral edge of said flap is formed with an interlocking feature to hold said flap in place after said repositioning step.

Please add the following new claims which are based on the original specification, filed on March 20, 1995:

24. (New) A method for accessing internal corneal tissue with a laser, said method comprising the steps of:

defining an anterior internal surface having a first periphery and a posterior internal surface having a second periphery in the stroma by directing the focal point of a laser beam along a first predetermined path to photodisrupt overlapping areas of stromal tissue; and

defining an access to the anterior internal surface and the posterior internal surface by directing the focal point of a laser beam along a second predetermined path to photodisrupt overlapping areas of stromal tissue, said predetermined path extending from the first and second peripheries to the outer surface of the cornea.

25. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of defining the anterior internal surface and the posterior internal surface includes the step of forming the first predetermined path in the pattern of a spiral.

26. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of defining the anterior internal surface and the posterior internal surface includes the steps of forming a first path to define the anterior surface and a second path to define the posterior surface.

27. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the anterior internal surface and the posterior internal surface coincide.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the first periphery and the second periphery coincide.

29. (New) The method of claim 26, and further including the steps of forming the anterior internal surface in a convex shape and, forming the posterior internal surface in a concave shape such that a lens-shaped body of stromal tissue is formed between the two surfaces.

30. (New) The method of claim 29, and further including the step of removing the lens-shaped body through an opening formed along the second predetermined path.

31. (New) The method of claim 24, and further including the step of forming the second predetermined path in a spiral pattern starting at the first and second peripheries and extending to the outer surface of the cornea.

32. (New) The method of claim 24, and further including the step of forming the anterior internal surface in a concave shape.

33. (New) The method of claim 24, and further including the step of forming the posterior internal surface in a concave shape.

34. (New) The method of claim 24, and further including the step of forming the anterior internal surface in a convex shape.

35. (New) The method of claim 24, and further including the step of forming the posterior internal surface in a convex shape.

36. (New) The method of claim 24, and further including the step of forming the anterior internal surface and the posterior internal surface substantially in the shape of a circle.

37. (New) The method of claim 24, and further including the step of forming the anterior internal surface and the posterior internal surface substantially in the shape of an oval.

38. (New) The method of claim 12 wherein said removable layer remains attached to the cornea at a hinge, creating a flap with a peripheral edge.